MY DICKENS FRIENDS

FRANK SPEAIGHT

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MY DICKENS FRIENDS

From an etching

FRANK SPEAIGHT
as
Grandfather Smallweed
(Bleak House)

MY DICKENS FRIENDS

BY

FRANK SPEAIGHT

Illustrated
by R. A. WEED

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PICKWICK PAPERS

MR. PICKWICK

Pickwick, immortal!
Loud is the laughter
With which men greet thee
All over the world.
Not England alone,
Sphere of thy wand'rings,
Welcomes thee ever
With fondest salute—
Whole nations ring forth
Their hearty guffaw;
And children unborn
Will take up the strain
Blessing the master
That sent thee and Sam
Rippling with laughter
Around a sad world.

SAM WELLER

Pickwick Papers

Sam, we dearly love you,
The whole world shakes your hand;
Sam, we gladly greet you,
You're known in ev'ry land.

Wherever we go,
Wherever we be,
Whether on land,
Whether on sea,
Ev'ry one loves you
And laughs at your name;
Your jests are remembered
And firm is your fame.

The world is better for your sojourn
Here on earth below.
Your native wit in simple words
On all you did bestow.
It mattered not if times were bright,
Or if the days were dark,
You whistled your way through, dear Sam;
You were a merry spark.

SAM WELLER
(Pickwick Papers)

WINKLE

Pickwick Papers

Always in trouble,
  Always in woe.
Making mistakes
  Wherever you go.
Owning to nothing
  That you cannot do;
Always found out
  Then trying anew.
In many a scrape
  Dear Pickwick you got,
Your follies were smiled at
  And soon were forgot.
In love you were bold
  And cared not a jot
For you won those dear boots
  With fur round the top.

ARABELLA ALLEN

Pickwick Papers

I see you, Arabella, on that stile
With Winkle gazing on you all the while.
Or are there other sights for which he stops—
Those little boots with fur round the tops?

Ah, little boots have done great harm before,
And pretty little gloves have done much more,
And ruddy cheeks have many an invite given,
But rosy lips have led lost men to heaven.

TONY WELLER

Pickwick Papers

"Beware of widders, my dear son,
Take my advice and widders shun,
I've had enough of family strife,
With that there Stiggins and the wife."
But Tony, your dear wife was weak
For Stiggins' ways, he was so sleek.
She did it for your soul's great good,
And when she died, you understood.
We hear your coach go rattling by,
Down Ludgate Hill you seem to fly.
The coach, your horses, all's a song
As o'er the road you dash along.
Your heart's as big, your laugh's as free
As Captain Cuttle's on the sea.
You both were simple-hearted souls,
Your shaking laugh no sneer controls.
You bow in awe when some great mind
As such in Pickwick you do find.
Sam's proud of you, and so are we,
You're friend to all, you're friend to me.

MRS. BARDELL.

Pickwick Papers.

I have a kind of deep regret
  For you, Widow Bardell.
Dodson and Fogg laid well their net
  For you, Widow Bardell.

At first you thought that Pickwick loved,
  You did, Widow Bardell.
You know you did, till it was proved
  He didn't, Widow Bardell.

For when you fell into his arms,
  My dear Widow Bardell,
You thought he'd ne'er resist your charms,
  You did, Widow Bardell.

But still, don't cry, it all came right,
  Deceived Widow Bardell,
For Pickwick paid to end the fight;
  Cheer up, Widow Bardell.

DODSON & FOGG

Pickwick Papers

"The Law's an Ass" a man once said,
At least I know that's what I read.
It's sometimes rogue as well as ass
And things most strange have come to pass.
The law in all its truth and pride
Beneath its cloak will often hide
Far greater rogue than's in the dock
For crowded court to jeer and mock.
Dodson and Fogg, you are but two
Of all your motley, rotten crew
That'll take a man and drain him dry
By lies, not truth, then pass him by
As if you'd never touched his hand.
I'd take you two and all your band
And empty out your golden hoard,
And broken hearts should be restored,
And beggars that your thefts have made
By all the foxy plans you laid,
Should have again their stolen wealth
And peace and honour, home and health.
While you I'd shy into the scales
Where righteous judgment still prevails.
Then law would lift her head again
Without a blot on her fair name.

BUZFUZ

Pickwick Papers

Chops and tomato sauce, I you implore
Beneath those simple words to see far more
Than meets the eye in one first rapid glance.
Another point I now to you advance—
The plaintiff here, I place before your eye—
Look on that face of innocence. I sigh
To think that Pickwick there could ever find
A heart to love, then crush, then throw behind.
My client's hopes are ruined, her prospects nil;
There is no tenant, no longer hangs the bill,
"Apartments for a Single Gentleman."
Men come and go, and shattered is life's plan;
And fifteen hundred pounds is far too small
A sum to pay for days beyond recall.
A serpent there in spectacles you see,
A single man, from care and fancy free,
Who talks of warming pans and chops and sauce,
Then breaks domestic bliss without remorse;
A man, who throws life's ashes on the sward.
I say, let damages be his reward.

ALFRED JINGLE

Pickwick Papers

We love you, though you were a fraud,
  You were so droll;
The world's your audience, who applaud
  Your comic soul.

You led our Pickwick quite a dance
  With din and clatter,
As through the pages you advance
  With flowing chatter.

But at the end you turned out well
  Free from mishap.
So you we bless, where'er you dwell,
  You actor chap!

MISS WARDLE

Pickwick Papers

A pity I have always felt for you,
For Tupman was a man who would prove true;
But Jingle won, knocked "Tuppy" off his perch,
Then took hard cash and left you in the lurch.

Your heart was swift to take the proferred chance,
From man to man you all too quickly dance,
But thank your lucky stars your flight was vain,
And that your brother brought you home again.

Tupman soon forgot midst life and men,
But you of him, I'm sure, though now and then,
Of how he might have been your hubby true,
Had not false Jingle run away with you.

TRACY TUPMAN

Pickwick Papers

Dear Tupman, you're affectionate,
  Dear Tupman, you're a beau,
Dear Tupman, all appreciate
  Your heart, and love you so.

The ladies all adore you,
  The ladies are your friends,
The ladies fondly love you,
  Their presence always sends
The blood in tumult rushing
  Around your tender heart.
All through the pages, blushing,
  You play your gallant part.

Dear Tupman, you're affectionate
  But never give offence,
For all is so appropriate
  In a Pickwickian sense.

THE FAT BOY

Pickwick Papers

Laugh and grow fat, 'tis logic sound
That should around a world resound,
It lifts the soul, it cheers the heart,
Dull melancholy must depart.
To see the good in ev'ry soul,
Gives us both balance and control.
Did melancholy e'er do good
With all its ways so dark and rude?
Joe, you're a blessing in disguise,
Your very fat we'll not despise,
You'll never know how the world laughs
At you, or how it often chaffs
At all your fat-like lazy ways
That filled the life of Pickwick days.
You'll never know that laughter's cheap,
For, bless your soul, you're fast asleep.

MR. WARDLE

Pickwick Papers

The rich brown soil that smells so sweet,
That clings in fondness to my feet,
As man and nature gladly meet,
Sets all my blood a bounding free;
The earth is very dear to me.

The sun, the rain, the rising mist;
Look up, the cloud a lark has kissed.
My soul is full, who can resist
The pulsing beauty of the dawn,
Above a field of waving corn.

A farmer's life is real and free;
A farmer's life's the life for me,
For towns I seldom care to see.
If farmers go, the World's unmade,
And soon would stop with all its trade.

THE COACH

Pickwick Papers

I hear once again the hum of your wheels,
And the sway of the coach again one feels.
The glint of harness, the crack of the whip,
The clamp of the brakes as we take the dip.

Once more on the level and off we go,
The clatter of hoofs on the road below;
Then the rise of the hill in front is seen!
The sweetness of air in the morning keen.

We now take the hill with gallop and dash,
The hedges we pass as if in a flash.
A farmer with plough here waves us his hand;
We're nearing a village in sweet moorland.

The children shout as we dash through the street,
And the bugle rings out their welcome to meet.
We stop for a spell, the new team's put in,
Then we vanish in dust and clatter and din.

MR. PICKWICK
(Pickwick Papers)

AUGUSTUS SNODGRASS

Pickwick Papers

Augustus was a poet, so they said
Though no one ever read a single lay
That he had ever penned in joy or fear;
Yet to his friends Augustus was a seer.

He looked a poet, had that dreamy eye
That gazed at you, yet seemed to pass you by;
That cloak of his, a poet's was for sure.
Of sonnets he must have a goodly store.

And thus it is that many pass for wise
That shut their mouth and cultivate a guise
Which oft deceives a wond'ring world around
Who in their silence see a depth profound.

BOB SAWYER

Pickwick Papers

How many men like you, poor Bob,
  Have toiled in vain;
Or did you toil, or let mirth rob
  You, to your pain?

Often the mirth attached to youth,
  Thinks work a bore,
Blind in the present to the truth—
  Youth comes no more.

But cheer up, Bob, we'll not forget
  On your behalf
You gave the world, which loves you yet,
  A hearty laugh.

DAVID COPPERFIELD

DAVID COPPERFIELD

David Copperfield

Through London's streets your little form
  In dreams I plainly see;
Then trudging on the Dover Road
  As tired, as tired can be.
The vision of your Aunt's stern form
  Oft rises to your mind;
You dread to go, but you fear more
  The life you left behind.

But that stern Aunt had heart as soft
  And kind as kind can be,
And Dick, with pleased attentive face
  Was just as fond as she.
These are the scenes I conjure up
  Whene'er I hear your name.
Charles Dickens' fav'rite child you were
  And the whole world's the same.

DORA

David Copperfield

Sweet and tender, pure and good,
Soft and artless,
Misunderstood.

Fair and childlike, young and true,
Like blossom rare
Your days were few.

Childwife to your husband dear,
You'd ever be,
Had you stayed here.

Soul as clear as sunlight ray,
You brightly shine,
Then fade away.

LITTLE EM'LY

David Copperfield

Fond love will often lead the young astray
When will no longer points and leads the way.
If Christian men would like their Master live
All fallen angels here they would forgive.

The very absence of forgiveness here
Will shut the door of hope through very fear.
Many a heart now broken, torn and frayed
Forgiveness would have healed, and love
remade.

You who have never felt the tempter's power
Know not the anguish crushed in one short hour.
So many owe their stainless life to fate,
And never heard those awful words "Too late!"

So, weary one, here on your Uncle's breast
Lay your dear head and know a perfect rest.
True Christian he, who took you to his heart
And kissed your tears away, and healed the
smart.

STEERFORTH

David Copperfield

Endowed you were with many a manly grace,
With mind as keen as any of your time;
A Chatham, or a man as big as he
You might have been, had you been trained aright.
Your youth was blighted by a mother's hand,
Who saw herself in you, and nursed the fault;
Who pampered pride, till pride held firm the reins.
To fine ambition no one showed the way,
You strolled through life without an aim or road,
Temptation met you on your aimless way
And for your empty hand found work to do;
Then at the end when death claimed you its prey
We grieved to think of all you might have been;
That one, with possibilities so great,
Should on a wave be tossed, a useless thing;
A nature spoilt by foolish mother's hand.

DANIEL PEGGOTTY

David Copperfield

Forgive! Forgive! O, that the world would hear,
And heal the wound in many an erring heart.
But many men who claim the Christian faith
Will see the one whose love has conquered will
With outstretched hands implore them to forgive;
While they, with conscious pride of stainless life,
Unlike their Master, turn a proud, deaf ear—
E'en though the one that pleads may be their own.

O parents proud, look on old Peggotty
Who tramped a world to find the child he loved,
And comfort her on his big gracious heart.

HAM

David Copperfield

There are some men who in their simple faith
Like grown up children move along life's way.
Of learning they have nought but nature's gifts,
But in their hearts they hold a golden store.
What they love once, they love eternally,
The love akin to hate they never feel,
Fierce sorrow to their soul adds greater depth
And gives a growth that joy can never give
Though love be false to them, they love on still.
Like a river on its grand majestic course
They make their way in silence to the sea—
That mighty ocean named eternity.

MRS. GUMMIDGE

David Copperfield

Great trials will change the outlook of a life,
A peace will make, where there was always strife;
  A death will change a boy into a man
  His father's place to take in life's new plan.
A love will come, art's door will open wide
And show a soul once dead the gifts inside.
  The trials of others sometimes quick will change
  Our nature's heart, and better heart exchange.
Poor Mrs. Gummidge nursed her new-born grief
Till it deep-rooted grew without relief;
  Then cause of sorrow borne was killed by days
  And melancholy settled with its ways—
Those ways of dull depression and repine
That taint a household with its dull decline
  But when the heart that saw and soothed your pain
  Felt that dread sorrow fall, to you again
Came strength to sooth his torn and troubled soul,
And weaker vessel found a strong control.
  Thus sorrow often lifts us from the earth
  And to our useless selves gives newer birth.

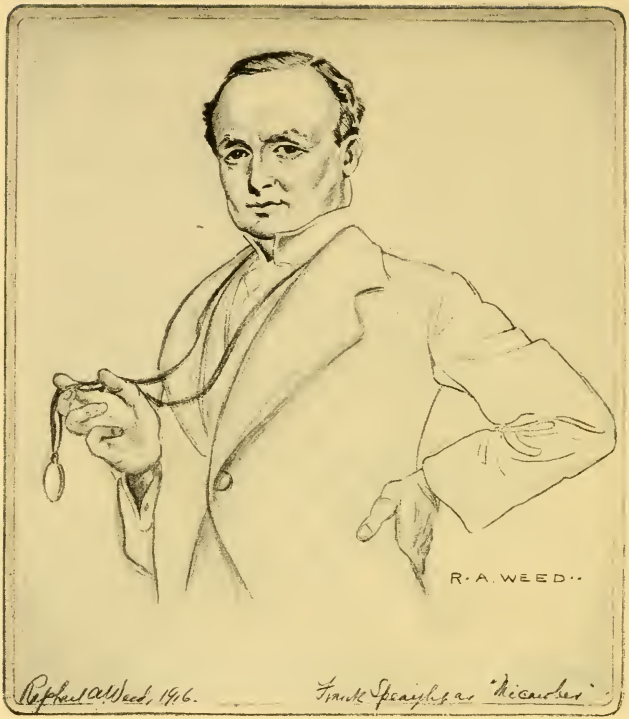
BARKIS

David Copperfield

How many men like you there are
  Who dare not woo.
They view the prize as from afar,
They know exactly where they are,
  But words are few.

They think of thee and bless thy name
  With hearts a-thrilling.
Right boldly to her side they come
But stammer out with falt'ring tongue,
  "Barkis is willing."

All knew well
  What those words meant.
A thousand thus their love will tell,
For on the world you've brought to dwell
  A sweet content.



MR. MICAWBER
(David Copperfield)

MICAWBER

David Copperfield

Your stately walk I often see
Your beaming smile is dear to me,
Your very hope to me will be
  A guide and constant friend.

Of course you had your faults, we know,
And who has not, I'd like to know?
On all and sundry you'd bestow
  Your wisdom, keen and true.

If your own maxims you had kept,
From England's soil you'd ne'er have stepped,
But Fortune's gate you would have leapt
  In dear old London Town.

URIAH HEEP

David Copperfield

Environment it is that moulds our lives,
And as we train the child, so that child thrives.
Example must be set for the young mind,
And whether good or bad, he's close behind
And follows in the steps his parents make
To whether good or evil they may take.
The 'umble son had 'umble parents, too,
That cast a likeness of themselves anew.
And Dickens when he drew thee, knew the plan
That makes the good or evil in the man.

MISS BETSY TROTWOOD

David Copperfield

How many women hide a heart as sound
And true and pure as yours, Betsy Trotwood,
Who show a prying world the sterner side,
While deep below there beats the memory
Of happy days, that cannot come again.
Not always those who use endearing terms
Will freely give their time, their cash, their all
To help a friend when words no longer serve.
The face is oft a mask to hide a heart
As tender, soft and true as thine, good soul.
The voice will oft deceive by its sharp tone;
By actions only can we judge a friend.

MR. DICK

David Copperfield

How many men with brilliant wit
To hold your hand are far from fit,
Because with you your simple soul
Is clean and good and in control.

Much better have a feeble mind
With all that's true and good and kind
Than have a brain as strong as steel
Without a virtue to reveal.

The things you thought, the things you said
Were harmless as King Charles's head;
And all your troubles soon took flight
When gazing upward at your kite.

Dear harmless Dick, may we all be
As peaceful at life's end as thee.
God bless that soul who took good care
To guard you from a lone despair.

TRADDLES

David Copperfield

Where'er I see the human form
In bones arrayed,
I think of Creakle School and you
With slate displayed.

The skeleton was ably drawn
To sooth your pain
That from your trousers tight was torn
By Creakle's cane.

As friend you were as true as steel—
You bore no grudge;
Destined an honoured place to fill,
A noble judge.

We think of you with that stiff curl
And simple heart.
With you, and with your dearest girl
We're loth to part.

MR. MURDSTONE

David Copperfield

The wisest man is sometimes wrong,
  While fools oft coax a will too strong;
For right we cannot always be,
  And other views the World may see.

The heart can guide as well as mind;
  Accomplish more by being kind.
What will may fail in years to do,
  One word of kindness will renew.

It's the same story o'er and o'er—
  That men have often heard before—
That even virtues made too strong,
  May some day change and be a wrong.

Let's take our wills and rule them right,
  Strong only when for good we fight,
Weak let them be to do a wrong;
  To do the right, let them be strong.

MISS MOUCHER

David Copperfield

How volatile
  You always were
To madam prim
  Or surly sir.
You did your best
  In your short life
To hide your pain
  In duty's strife.
Your brave kind heart
  One seldom saw,
Yet soon 'twas found
  True to the core.
Some souls will have
  All earth can give
Yet grumbling on
  They seem to live;
While you will hide
  In joke and laugh
The care and sorrow
  With all your chaff.

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY

KATE NICKLEBY

Nicholas Nickleby

Kate Nickleby, your lovely face
  Is the index of a soul
That purifies earth's dusty place
  Where sin stalks beyond control.

Vice meets sweet virtue on its road
  Stands stock-still and thinks of heaven;
Longs there to drop its sinful load
  And by you to be forgiven.

The mem'ry of a woman pure
  Keeps a man in his straight way;
It plants his foot on ground that's sure,
  Making life a sunlit way.

NEWMAN NOGGS

Nicholas Nickleby

Prosperity has many friends
  Who crowd around our door.
They swear they'll ever be our friends,
  Then borrow from our store.

But when adversity comes nigh
  And takes our very all,
They see us not, they pass us by,
  On us they never call.

Poor Newman Noggs, where are those friends
  Who pledged you with high glee?
They've gone the way of all the friends
  Who spy adversity.

How glad I am that your last days
  Were peaceful, fair and bright.
The children their dear Newman praise,
  Their constant dear delight.

CHEERYBLE BROTHERS

Nicholas Nickleby

Sweet natures like your own we seldom find
Unless some trouble has refined the mind.
For if our life has always fortune's smile
Other's sorrows we never see the while.
But if the heart has felt cold sorrow's pain
We play the man; a broader view we gain.
When sorrow comes, turn not thy head away
From Him who sends it, for that sorrow may
In your dead self a greater self reveal
And noble tumult make where all was still.
The mighty war of nineteen-fourteen came
And England in her heart was not the same;
Men who e'er before their wealth had stored,
On wounded souls gave freely of their hoard;
And Cheerybles sprang up in every town,
While Selfishness threw off her somber gown;
And nations thus were changed by sorrow's ways,
For self had gone, and learned more gen'rous ways.

TIM LINKINWATER

Nicholas Nickleby

Your ledgers are your pride,
You care for nought beside.
Here Nicholas could please
Because he crossed his t's.
The Cheerybles to you
Are merchants sound and true.
Your silver specs. appear
To shine with wisdom clear.
Oft from your attic roof
You ask if one with truth
A grander view could meet
Than London at your feet.
Contentment was your bliss
Until you met that Miss,
There by that glowing fire,
Whose beauty you admire.
Your hand steals round her waist;
The time you do not waste.
Your love you there confess,
Bless her, she answers, "Yes!"

MANTALINI

Nicholas Nickleby

Some men will smile while others weep,
  And waste God's time while others toil;
As long as one "Their Grace" will keep,
  Their clean white hands they will not soil

These wasters of God's fruitful earth
  Will lean on woman's arm to guide,
While she, stone-blind to his real worth,
  Will coax and pamper his false pride.

Such men (not worthy of the name)
  I'd string like crows upon a line,
For other wastrels in their fame
  To see and know and dread the sign.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS

SCROOGE
(A Christmas Carol)

SCROOGE

A Christmas Carol

Cash has a power as strong as any god,
And, like a slaver, uses oft his rod.
What once was thrift, too soon a vice can be,
If gain, alone, should get ascendency.

Love has no place, while money holds its sway;
Our eyes are fixed on earth and lose the way
That leads us to a sweet contented mind;
So drop the gold, and greater treasure find.

New Scrooge, I grasp you hand and hold it tight,
For kindly word and money used aright.
What matter if a ghost taught you the way,
The truth, though late, you found on Christmas Day.

MARLEY'S GHOST

A Christmas Carol

The ghosts of our departed selves will rise
And show to us where happiness still lies.
Not what we have, if power or wealth it be,
But sweet contented mind and purity.

We ever strive for what we see before,
While gems lie at our feet upon life's floor.
We look far out to what we may attain,
The phantom-like oasis on the plain.

We reach our goal, we view the prize we've gained,
But to our wealth, alas, our soul is chained.
We know we've lost the peace of our young days,
When love, not cash, led us through flowery ways.

BOB CRATCHIT

A Christmas Carol

To make the best of life,
  That is the way
To greet the morning sun
  Of each full day.

A fixed contented mind
  To seek no more,
And full enjoyment find
  In our small store.

And if our wealth be small,
  No good to pout,
But like our friend, good Bob,
  Just do without.

TINY TIM

A Christmas Carol

It is the smaller things on earth
  That lead us by the hand.
We know full well their love and worth
  And they, too, understand.

A child's soft hand has not the strength
  And yet it leads with ease.
We go its way to any length,
  Our one great thought, to please.

The children rule our very life
  Where'er our fortunes run.
All hear Tim's voice above the strife
  "God bless us Everyone."

TILLY SLOWBOY

The Cricket on the Hearth

Your eyes were always opened wide
In vast astonishment and pride;
To think that you, a foundling once,
Should drop in here by some good chance.

With Dot and John and Baby, too;
And Baby's head, though very new,
You'd crack and whack and knock about,
And scarcely ever hear him shout.

Your shape was spare and straight and lean,
The straightest I have ever seen.
Your clothes on pegs of shoulders caught,
As if to slip was their one thought.

The Cricket chirps, the kettle sings—
Such homely voices, simple things—
Such homely voices bring to earth
Much more than all its gold is worth.

TROTTY VECK

The Chimes

I see you in the cold keen air
  Go trotting by,
Your cheery face, without a care,
  Like summer sky.

Contented with your humble lot
  And lowly sphere,
You care, brave Trotty, not a jot
  For fortune's sneer.

A lesson to us all you teach,
  To all, to me;
To take the things within our reach
  And contented be.

OLIVER TWIST

OLIVER TWIST

Oliver Twist

O, that God's net could gather in
  The wand'ring children of the earth.
They call the dears, the fruit of sin,
  With only pain to crown their birth.

"Forgive! Forgive!" Christ cries, "Forgive."
  He knows 'twas sin; the parents, too.
O, Christians, here's a chance to give
  The mercy which makes souls anew.

Come, gather up the helpless lambs
  That wander lost on earth's cold hills.
The heavy door a world oft slams,
  And with despair the poor heart fills.

O, take the children, give them rest;
  Forgive the parents who have erred.
The Magdalene our Master blest;
  The sinner's cry He always heard.

NANCY

Oliver Twist

The virtue here of being good
  Depends entirely on our food.
If that be good, from clean hands given,
  It naturally leads the way to heaven.

But some have food of rotten kind,
  That taints the soul and blights the mind.
In sin they're trained from very youth,
  With not one chance to know the truth.

From childhood up, the passing years
  Are filled with only blows and tears.
Darkness behind, no hope before;
  Mere wrecks of souls upon life's shore.

Perhaps in heaven, when we get there,
  The bad with good will have a share;
For God will look beyond a fault
  To see how the poor soul was taught.

BILL SIKES

Oliver Twist

'Tis conscience points and guides the way,
And stifle it howe'er we may,
It dogs the steps of every crime,
It counts not days, it counts not time.

If 'tis obeyed when crime is thought,
In birth that crime will come to nought;
If pushed aside and cast behind
It rakes and tears a fearful mind.

'Tis folly thus to think the sun
Can shine again when crime is done.
'Tis only Christ can heal the pain
And give a soul its peace again.

FAGIN

Oliver Twist

Some men seem void of all that's good,
  Without one thought but sordid gain
On crime new done, they inly brood,
  On crime to do, on tools to train.

His Tools the youth of London streets,
  Young flow'rs all blasted by his crime.
Souls scorched by sin, no one entreats
  A mercy from this king of crime.

O, that a hangman's rope might reach
  All such as you, who blight the earth;
Remove the Blossoms from your reach,
  And in pure soil give newer birth.

QUILP

Oliver Twist

Not fit to live
  Not fit to die.
All you could give
  Was blow for sigh.
Your darkened soul
  No light could pierce,
No more control
  Than devil fierce.
Your twisted shape
  Your twisted mind,
Suggests the ape
  Or some brute kind.
All such as ye
  That walk the earth
Had better be
  Stone dead at birth,
Unless some plan
  Can send control
To change the man
  And cleanse his soul.

BUMBLE

Oliver Twist

It seems so queer to me
That pomposity
  Is always found
  In fools profound.

It seems so strange to me
That humility
  Is always found
  With sense profound.

For Bumble with his lace
People will give place.
  Sense without pride
  Is pushed aside.

THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

LITTLE NELL

Old Curiosity Shop

Sleep on, sweet Nell, sleep on.
Life's but a dream,
While death's the door
Through which we pass
To bliss immortal.

Sleep on, sweet Nell, sleep on.
Death's but a sleep
From which we wake
To our real life
In its realms eternal.

DICK SWIVELLER

Old Curiosity Shop

True hearts oft beat beneath the humble breast,
And faults will hide from others all that's best.
Until the test doth come, one never knows
How warm the blood that from a kind heart flows.

Not ev'ry one that gains earth's wealth and power
Will reckon such success in life's last hour.
The kindly word, the silent action done
Will bring us peace when sands of life have run.

THE MARCHIONESS

The Old Curiosity Shop

How many children here
Like women grown appear,
No childish games to cheer,
Or mother's love.

Our Little Marchioness
In cap and tattered dress
With Sally Brass to press
And drive you on.

How well you nursed poor Dick
When he was lone and sick,
You proved a little brick
A right true friend.

I often think of you
As married, happy, true;
You each deserve it, too.
God bless you both.

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT

MARK TAPLEY

Martin Chuzzlewit

No merit in being jolly, Mark,
When life goes like a song;
But to smile and jest and laugh aloud
When all goes wrong.

It's so easy to be brave and bright
When all fits in our way,
But to face the storm and still have faith
That wins the day.

So we'll greet our troubles with a smile,
Grief shall be a folly;
When all is black as it can be,
We'll murmur "Jolly!"

TOM PINCH AND MARY GRAHAM

Martin Chuzzelwit

A sweet child climbs upon my knee,
'Tis hers,
Not mine. Such joys were not to be,
But tears.
Those tears have long since stayed their course,
For joy has long since dried their source;
I have no sorrow or remorse
For those past days.

She lives with him she loved so well,
Why should I grieve?
She dreamt not how my heart did swell,
Why should I grieve?
My love is pure as mountain stream
As bright and clear as morning's beam,
To me an angel she doth seem,
Why should I grieve?

RUTH PINCH

Martin Chuzzlewit

Fair women place their hand on God's tired world,
And love and peace and joy is there unfurled.
It always was, and still is Nature's plan,
That her pure soul shall quick refine the man.
And you, dear Ruth, a prize to Westlock brought,
Your precious heart was all the fond youth sought;
But with it came your soul, sweet pure thing
As clear and bright as that fresh fountain spring
That threw its waters up in sunlight clear
As you and your fond lover lingered near.
Your soft heart felt in all its new great love
That Tom's must lonely be, he could not prove
Like you his heart—as clean as strong, as tense,
As yours, dear Ruth,—so sorrow you drove hence
As only women can when love reveals
The secret sorrow that another feels.

PECKSNIFF

Martin Chuzzlewit

Hypocrisy if often veiled in pious sighs
With moral maxims pouring from its mouth,
And like the pharisee of old, it lifts its eyes
To thank the Lord it walks the path of truth.

With lifted, flabby hands it blesses all that's near,
While stupid phrases fall from its big mouth;
For its oily slowness and unctuous tone severe
To simple folks seem wisdom pure and truth.

But as a thing to loath Charles Dickens drew you well,
For you, and all your tribe, we've learned to hate,
With all your salvey ways your end we can foretell,
And with old Pecksniff envy not your fate.

SARAH GAMP

Martin Chuzzlewit

The days have gone when such as you
Tramped through the world.
Thank Heav'n for that!
A kindly act you'd never do,
With lip scorn-curled
You nursed the brat.

No gentle hand upon a brow
Was laid by you,
You cross old thing.
None such as you are with us now,
But women true
Who sweetness bring.

Charles Dickens killed you by his chaff,
And women sweet
Stand in your place;
Yet still we are "dispoged" to laugh
When in the street
We see your face.

MRS. HARRIS

Martin Chuzzlewit

I wonder where you live,
Mrs. Harris?
I wonder if you live,
Mrs. Harris?

In dreams you're ever floating by,
I hear poor Sarah's teapot sigh,
She quotes your words, she pipes her eye,
Your wisdom no one can deny,
Mrs. Harris.

P'raps Sarah's met you now,
Mrs. Harris.
I wonder when and how,
Mrs. Harris?

If you were ever on this earth,
You've hid yourself right well since birth,
But Sarah Gamp she knew your worth,
Though Betsy Prig denied your birth,
Mrs. Harris.

MONTAGUE TIGG

Martin Chuzzlewit

As long as fools of men so ready place
Their sweat-earned cash with such a blinded trust,
With unknown rogues who fish with gilded nets
With artful bait of ten or more per cent.,
So long, O, gorgeous Montague, will you
And all your rotten tribe go through the world.
Far easier 'tis to earn than to invest,
And greed is the sure path of losing all;
Then men ring hard their hands and say "'Tis Fate";
'Tis not, 'tis greed and hast'ning to be rich.
An honest man an honest price will pay;
Men look askance, for Tigg goes marching by
With showman's rattle of his golden box,
And men, like foolish children, crowd around
To take his dividends, till rattle, box
And all swift disappear, bringing them nought
But fierce regret and knowledge they've been fooled.

JONAS CHUZZLEWIT

Martin Chuzzlewit

How many parents in this world there are
  Would give their lives if they could but recall
The careful training that has gone too far
  And like the blight of autumn leaf doth fall.

They taught the child to save with careful hand
  And count the cost of ev'ry penny spent,
Till as a vice it held like iron band
  And virtue turned to vice, but practice lent.

Fond parent with a temp'rance train the child—
  To save too much, to covet soon will lead.
To covet leads, God knows, to all things wild,
  To theft and worse—all sprung from one bad
    seed.

URIAH HEEP
(David Copperfield)

DOMBEY AND SON

CAPTAIN CUTTLE

Dombey & Son

What is it on the windy sea
That cleans the heart and makes it free?
  What is it in its mighty space
  That kindness in the heart doth place?

Simplicity of sailor souls
We know your breezy breath controls;
  Thy salty spray and sunlight clear
  Instils their hearts with godly fear.

A sailor's but a grown-up child
On which the rolling years have smiled
  A man we love, a trusty friend,
  Our hand in faith we here extend.

TOOTS

Dombey & Son

Temp'rance in all things, that's the key
To health, and death to misery.

How many wise fools in the world there are
That coax the willing mind to go too far,
That say of learning one can never fill
Till broken health and mind must pay the bill.
How many a young mind has on this rock
Been shattered for a world to sneer and mock.
No prison holds the hand that pushed behind
And wrecked the precious life with its fair mind.
O, that the world would take such pedagogues
And on their hide apply a thousand rods.

Poor Toots, I sigh when your scared face I've seen,
And think, alas, of all you might have been.

CARKER

Dombey & Son

Some men turn round and rend the hand
  That gave them daily food.
They seem in their ungracious souls
  Devoid of gratitude.
They eat your food; they drink their fill,
  And ask and cringe for more,
Then call you fool to be their tool;
  Walk forth and leave you poor.

False Carkers with their shining teeth,
  Their soft-like, cattish ways,
Still walk the stones of London streets
  And all the world's byeways.
Beware! Beware! Take not their hand,
  It's soft and hides its claws.
First know your man, then give your hand;
  Beware of smiling jaws.

BLEAK HOUSE

GRANDFATHER SMALLWEED

Bleak House

The only reason we can call you friend,
(A term one here can scarcely comprehend)
Is that you show to us, by your mean ways,
What havoc to a man mere meanness plays.
For, when we look on such a worm as you
And think what greed has made you through and through—
That hard unfeeling, sordid, rotten thing,
Who, to a bag of gold would fiercely cling,
E'en though that gold would drag your soul to hell—
A lesson to ourselves you ably tell.

POOR JO

Bleak House

How often in some murky place
We see a child
With actions mild
But sorrow stamped on its young face.

Like little birds lost on the earth,
Nowhere to fly,
Nowhere to cry
And lay their head and know love's worth.

Dr. Barnado, I to you
Bow low my head.
You clearly read
The lesson that Charles Dickens drew.

CHADBAND

Bleak House

How many men with soft and oily speech
Unworthy to instruct, aspire to teach,
With lifted eyes they stand like very saint,
While all the while the very air they taint.

With right hand they will bless, with other take
The very wealth that busy people make;
Who say to train the soul use well the rod.
Forgetting all the while a gracious God.

They bless their meat, then stuff and have their
fill,
While to the poor they say, "It is God's will."
Their senseless words like oil and butter flow
Deceiving worthy mortals here below.

They spoil the work of worthy men and true
Who in their church must pray and work anew;
No nobler men than ministers of grace.
Of such a Chadband I would clear the place.

RICHARD CARSTON

Bleak House

Perhaps the cruellest thing on earth
Is law;
And when we feel at very birth
Its paw,
Then life right on to us will be
A pain
To look for our right heritage
In vain.
The years roll on with patient hope
Deferred,
Says Law, because you sit and mope,
"Absurd!
You're better than you used to be."
But see
Still broken hearts are made by thee,
O Chancery!
O Chancery!

MR. JARNDYCE

Bleak House

False critics, when I hear you sneer
With that self-important conscious leer,
That Dickens ne'er in his career
Did draw a gentleman.

I feel how ignorant you are
To downward look to find a star.
Look up, if you can see so far—
Here is a gentleman.

A man of noble mind and soul,
A man of perfect self-control;
A man the whole world can extol
As a true gentleman.

BARNABY RUDGE

BARNABY RUDGE

Barnaby Rudge

Poor Barnaby Rudge,
Earth paid you a grudge,
To bring you down here
With laugh and a tear;
And hardly to know
Which one to bestow
On things as they passed,
All glided so fast.
With bird on your wrist
No one could resist
To pity your plight
In life's sorry fight;
Yet laughed at your bird
Whose wisdom they heard.
How sad 'tis to know
That crime will bestow
On child such a blight,
For mother's poor sight.
I feel far out there
In God's silver air
Your mother will clasp
A sane boy at last.

MRS. RUDGE

Barnaby Rudge

Some women seem in misery to live
Their whole life through. No fault it is of theirs,
But sin of partner whom cruel fate has giv'n.
No matter how they strive, a brute called man
Will drag them down, and keep them suff'ring here.
No peace of home have they, no tender word,
No lover-like caress, or soft embrace;
But words like knives that tear a raking heart,
And blows that misery can scarcely feel.
O God, was it intended woman sweet
Should to such brutes eternally be joined
When all that should be holy is a blot?

LORD GEORGE GORDON

Barnaby Rudge

The cruellest god that dwells upon this earth
Is fanaticism. It sees one road
And one road only, to the far-off goal;
No hope for any but the way they walk.
All roads in ev'ry land lead to the sea.
All souls who live a good and straight clean life,
Who do to all as they would have them do
Are on the road to Heav'n. I wonder when
Fanatics reach the gate in the golden
Sunset of the Shining West, holding in
Their hands the instruments of torture that
They used in love to send a soul in pain
To Heav'n; if they will cringe when He who ne'er
Gave pain to any living thing, stands there
And shows to them His piercéd hands, will they
Expect Him then to say, "Well done thou good
And faithful servant."?

A TALE OF TWO CITIES
OUR MUTUAL FRIEND
HARD TIMES
LITTLE DORRIT
GREAT EXPECTATIONS
EDWIN DROOD

SYDNEY CARTON

A Tale of Two Cities

Dark clouds are spread above the new-born day,
The rain falls slanting there across the dale
The cold wind roars and whistles on its way
And hope seems dead and darkened is the vale.

High noon doth pass, but see it's raining still,
By afternoon the clouds are scatt'ring free;
The sun breaks through, and golden seems the hill,
And hope again a brighter world doth see.

At sunset in one bright and glorious haze
The sun goes down; we all forget the morn,
The darkness and the rain; this brilliant blaze
Obliterates the mem'ry of the dawn.

Thus, noble Carton, seems your short life here,
You gave your all for love and for a friend;
Your morn was dark with faults, without life's cheer,
But glorious as a sunset was your end.

BELLA

Our Mutual Friend

Of all the women I adore,
  A woman to the very core;
With all the faults of human kind,
  With all the twists and gifts of mind.

No goddess she, no saint above;
  But one to live with and to love.
A woman true, a living thing,
  A care, a joy, a song to sing,

A soul of smiles, of laughs of tears,
  A blessing to a man's lone years.
A woman always, fickle, good;
  Yet one that's oft misunderstood.

The one I hold to Dickens' fame:
  Sweet Bella Wilfer is her name.

MR. GRADGRIND

Hard Times

Facts! Facts!
Come, give us Facts!
Still we hear that blatant cry,
Facts! Facts!
Come, give us Facts!
See the Gradgrinds going by.

Let's take the Gradgrinds
Of the earth
And drown them in their Facts.
Imagination has its worth;
You'd kill a poet at his birth
And Pickwick, too, and harmless mirth
With your Facts!
Facts! Facts!

LITTLE DORRIT

Little Dorrit

Little Dorrit, to us you are as sweet
A child as Nell.
There in the murky fog you cross the street
Like phantom midst the traffic and the mist;
The thousands notice not, nor you assist;
O'er London Bridge, and past St. George's church
You turn, and through the fog looms up a porch,
The outer gate of your first home we see,
That tomb of broken hearts—The Marshalsea.

You teach us that the greatest thing is love,
And that right well.
You gave a fortune when you gave your love;
But Arthur knew the wealth of soul you gave,
The only wealth that can outlive the grave.
Lost fortune to you both it mattered nought
So long as it brought near the love you sought.
Still through the fog and mist of time I see
That tomb that is no more—The Marshalsea.

MISS HAVISHAM

Great Expectations

How is it that the whole world strives
  For an ideal to attain.
They'll pass a blessing in their way
  For a distant one to gain.
For though their love has turned to dust
  And a broken reed been found,
They'll clutch the dust and pass a love
  Truer, deeper, more profound.

When sorrow's hugged from year to year,
  Often pampered, nursed and fed,
Then virtue of our sorrow's gone,
  When by melancholy led.
Far braver is the soul that strives,
  To see joy in coming years.
New love will come at beckoned hand,
  Time and smiles will dry our tears.

EDWIN DROOD

Edwin Drood

There's silence in the heavy air
  And sadness on the breeze,
A word of dread is whispered there,
  And floats among the trees.

The sound is Murder! Murder!
  Hark, worse than that we hear,
Dickens' dead—he's dropped his pen—
  A world mourns at his bier.

Hands off that pen!
  There let it rest;
    His work unfinished should remain.
Hands off that pen.
  Young Drood's distress
    A myst'ry is. Let it remain.

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